

191

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SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM

Guatemala A-011  
Page 2

Mexican border area of San Marcos. Statistics include 34 assassinations, seven with reported signs of torture, and 12 kidnappings. Victims this month include nine small-scale farmers and peasants, seven finqueros or finca administrators, three businessmen, two military commissioners, a physician employed at the Presidential Palace, a campesino leader, a low-level labor leader, and the secretary-general of the Zacapa branch of the Christian Democratic Party. The Far Left probably initiated five incidents (8% of the total), including setting off propaganda bombs in Jutiapa, Escuintla and Cuyotenango, Suchitepequez. Government security forces or the Coalition parties probably were responsible for eight incidents (14%) and the remaining 78% were not readily attributable.

## II. Violence and the Elections

Opposition Front Is Main Target: Incidents of violence directed against the Opposition Front continued this month but on a lower level than in November. Those incidents which did occur were during the first half of the month, indicating that perhaps the rightist perpetrators of violence took a holiday break from their normal activities. Most prominent among the December victims was Romeo Anton Sanchez, Secretary-General of the DCG in Zacapa and Opposition Front candidate for deputy from that department. Anton reportedly was kidnapped in the early morning hours of December 10 by armed men in a light blue pick-up and has not been seen since. His relatives, the DCG national leadership and Opposition Front candidate Rios Montt have blamed the Government for his disappearance. According to his family, Anton had been repeatedly warned to desist from political activity by the Executive Officer of the Zacapa military base, Col. German Chupina Barahona. Ten journalists affiliated, as was Anton, with the Zacapa magazine Revista Miramundo, charged that Chupina had threatened to assassinate all of them because of the magazine's alleged "Communist tendencies." DCG leaders openly accused Chupina of complicity in the kidnapping of Anton, and Front deputies in Congress announced they would interpellate Interior Minister Herrera Ibarguen and Minister of Defense Rubio over the disappearance. Rubio told the press that "Anton was not being held at the Zacapa base, while National Police Director General Genaro Alvarado Robles said the police had no knowledge of the missing leader's whereabouts. Marios Sandoval, MLN chief and President of Congress, stated flatly that there would be no interpellation, which he dismissed as a plan to create a "political show."

DCG national leaders also have publicly condemned several lesser incidents of violent harassment around the country. In Santa Rosa a DCG activist propagandizer for General Rios on the Chiquimulilla-Cerritos road allegedly was beat... by unknown assailants

SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM

SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM

Guatemala A-011  
Page 3

and told to stop his political activity. The Opposition Front has charged that the Coalition mayoralty candidate of Agua Blanca, Jutiapa has armed his supporters to promote a terror campaign against his opposition. Similar harassment of the opposition also allegedly occurred this month in El Progreso and San Juan El Golfo, Guatemala Department.

Secord Motta Back on the Firing Line: On December 15, peraltista leader Roberto Secord Motta, whose erratic political activity has brought him into close contact with police authorities on several occasions, claimed that his house in the capital had been the object of a machine gun attack. Several bullets lodged in the walls of the house and two shots penetrated the interior, but no injuries resulted from the attack.

III. Large Armed Bands in San Marcos: There was an upsurge in incidents this month involving large, well-armed, olive-green uniformed bands in the Mexican frontier area of San Marcos. Units reportedly ranging up to forty men killed and robbed two military commissioners in Pajapita as well as a finquero in the same town and another in nearby Coatepeque. An encounter between a similar band and a Mobile Military Police Unit near Malacatan on December 4 resulted in one policeman seriously wounded and one band member killed. A coordinated army/police sweep operation of the area was initiated immediately afterward but no results have been reported. The press has speculated that the armed group is a guerrilla unit, but Guatemalan authorities have repeatedly stated publicly and privately that the San Marcos assaults have been perpetrated by bandits without any political connections.

SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM



SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM

Guatemala, A-011  
Page 4

IV. Attacks on Buses: Although not counted among December's 57 incidents, the most spectacular violence this month was a series of attacks against Guatemala City's eleven private bus combines, which unilaterally and illegally raised fares from 5 cents to 8 cents on December 21. Unidentified persons destroyed seats and windows in numerous buses, set fire to seven vehicles, and on January 2, when the bus companies briefly went on strike, frustrated individuals stormed the office of one company, destroying furniture and carrying off office equipment. The bus burnings, carried out in a well-coordinated manner by armed youths, led to press speculation that subversive groups were behind the protests. The police stated that no guerrilla groups were involved in the bus burnings but one GOG statement implied that the attackers were sponsored by the Opposition-controlled Municipality. The problem was resolved on the evening of January 2 when the GOG summoned the bus owners and warned them that they must restore the 5 cent fare and reinstate service immediately in order to avoid further inconvenience.

V. Unexplained Incidents: On December 6 a doctor who has provided medical services for the Presidency was assaulted by four armed men in front of his parents' home in the capital. He was seriously wounded, but now appears likely to survive.

Lazaro Yanez, a campesino leader in Quezaltepeque, Chiquimula, disappeared in the capital on December 17. The University Students Association (AEU) alleged that Yanez was captured by plainclothes policemen. The AEU speculated that the campesino leader was being persecuted for his defense of Quezaltepeque residents against attempted land confiscations by the mayor and military commissioner.

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